

October 2023

Response to stakeholder feedback

Technical Reference Guide: Windblast management in underground coal mines

The Resources Regulator (the Regulator) circulated the technical reference guide (TRG) Windblast management in underground coal mines for targeted consultation in September 2023. This document summarises the issues raised by stakeholders and details the Regulator’s response.

The feedback has been categorised into themes and the Regulator’s responses are set out below:

1. Definition of windblast

A stakeholder identified the description of windblast in section 3.1 did not match the definition of windblast in the definitions section.

Resources Regulator response

The Regulator has amended section 3.1 and use the definition in Appendix B “Windblast is an event resulting in sudden mass air movement that has the potential to cause injury to workers, damage the mine and mining equipment or seriously disrupt the mine’s ventilation system.”

2. Windblast prediction

A stakeholder found an inconsistency of the heading Prediction in section 3.3.2 when the TRG indicates windblast events are unpredictable and unplanned.

Resources Regulator response

The TRG in section 3.3.2 discusses examining the potential for a windblast event. The Regulator has amended the heading at 3.3.2 to be “Potential for windblast.”

3. Tether lines

A stakeholder identified that the TRG refers to lifelines that must be used in windblast zones. The TRG should refer to personal tether-lines. Lifelines are used for escape not windblast protection.

Resources Regulator response

The Regulator has amended the TRG to refer to personal tether-lines were appropriate instead of lifelines. The Regulator notes that tether-lines may be attached to lifelines.

4. Safe havens

A stakeholder asked that a definition of a windblast “safe haven” be provided in section 3.3.3.4 and that not defining the term may cause problems for mine operators determining suitable safe havens underground.

Resources Regulator response

The Regulator disagrees a definition is required in the TRG. The Regulator believes it is up to each mine operator to assess their operations for the most appropriate safe havens for their operation. Safe havens may differ from one mining operation to another. The TRG provides guidance through a set of 3 criteria for mine operators to decide on safe havens that are best for its operation.